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AUTHOR	de Bruin, Hendrik C.
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ABSTRACT

In 1969 Eastern New Mexico University's College of Education developed a program of one-semester internships at a variety of state facilities including mental institutions, rehabilitation centers, and hospitals. Coupled with the internships, one-week institutes were designed for students wanting some exposure to the facility but not wanting to spend an entire semester there. Students earn a full semester credit and academic grades for the internship and supporting college and facility courses. The employees of the facility, all with proper credentials, conduct seminars, counseling sessions, etc. and make sure all academic requirements are met. Periodic visits are made to all interns on a regular basis. Each intern is required to keep a daily log, and to write an evaluation of the experience. Program objectives are summarized as follows: a) to give students practical "relevant" educational experiences, b) to put theory into practice, c) to perform a service to New Mexico state agencies, d) to allow students an experience that will allow them to make an intelligent career choice, e) to increase the student's self-confidence prior to getting on the job, f) to train a greater number of students in the area of helping services so that state facilities may be adequately staffed, g) to help less fortunate individuals, and h) to enrich the total college learning experience. Further information on personnel, faculty, budget, and evaluation is included. (Author/MJM)

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INTERDISCIPLINARY INTERNSHIPS BETWEEN EASTERN NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY AND VARIOUS STATE AGENCIES

by

Hendrik C. de Bruin, Dean
College of Education
Eastern New Mexico University
Portales, New Mexico 88130
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Interdisciplinary Internships Between Eastern New Mexico University and Various State Agencies

General Summary

One of the greatest shortcomings of public higher education facing our nation today is the lack of providing students with relevant and meaningful educational experiences. Recognizing this necessity, Eastern New Mexico University is providing for its students either short term or semester long internships in education, psychology, special education, sociology, and guidance and counseling, at a variety of state agencies.

Among the facilities currently being utilized are: Las Vegas Mental Hospital, Las Lunas Medical Hospital Training School, Albuquerque Alcohol Rehabilitation Center, and Ft. Bayard Geriatric Hospital, to name a few.

Under special arrangements students live at the facility chosen, being housed with, eating with, and working with patients on a twenty-four hour basis. Students then return to campus following a semester of practical application. It has become a vital part of their total learning experience. Students become involved in individual and group psychotherapy. They work with patients toward helping them to accept themselves as productive useful citizens, ready to become a part of the real world.

Introduction to Eastern New Mexico University

Eastern New Mexico University, authorized by the Constitution of the State of New Mexico, is designed to provide higher educational and cultural opportunities for New Mexico and the southwest. The Legislature of 1972 located the university in Portales.

Easterns campus of more than 500 acres is located on the extreme eastern side of the state. It is 90 miles northeast of Roswell, New Mexico; 120 miles southwest of Amarillo, Texas, and 120 miles northwest of Lubbock, Texas.

Portales, the county seat of Roosevelt County, has an elevation of 4,000 feet and a population of 11,500. The entire eastern part of the state has large areas of farm land producing crops of wheat, grain sorghums, and cotton. Portales is

also known as the peanut capital of the southwest.

Today Eastern's physical plant is valued at more than 21 million dollars including 30 buildings, most of them constructed within the last 10 years. The newest building on campus is the Education Complex opened in September of 1969 at a cost of $619,000.

Eastern's enrollment has continued to grow, and today there are 4300 students on campus. Eastern also has branch campuses at Clovis. Roswell, and Tucumcari in addition to running a full evening program. In 1965, Eastern acquired the old Walker Air Force Base located at Roswell, New Mexico, including 241 acres of land and 27 major brick buildings estimated to be worth 30 million dollars. Today it serves as the Roswell Branch of Eastern New Mexico University.

Description and Development of the Program

Recognizing a felt need on the part of our students to become involved with people and individuals, the College of Education began a program of semester long internships in 1969 at a variety of state agencies. Students may select as part of their undergraduate or graduate program in the discipline concerned, to spend a semester at one of the following facilities:

Las Vegas Mental Hospital, Las Vegas, New Mexico
Las Lunas Medical Hospital Training Center, Las Lunas, New Mexico
Albuquerque Alcohol Rehabilitation Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico
Ft. Bayard Geriatric Hospital, Ft. Bayard, New Mexico
Southwest Mental Health Center, Las Cruces, New Mexico
Ft. Stanton Hospital, Ft. Stanton, New Mexico
Meadows Home for the Aged, Las Vegas, New Mexico

Coupled with the semester long internships, we have institutes of a week long for students wanting some exposure to the facility but do not wish to spend an entire semester there.

Students earn a full semesters credit on their program while interning. The college has created courses in clinical experience and internship. Academic grades are received for all

courses, earning a maximum of 16 semester hours of credit.

Periodic visits are made to all interns on a regular basis. The employees of the facility, all with proper credentials, conduct seminars, counseling sessions, etc. and make sure that all academic requirements are met.

The state facilities in New Mexico have been kind enough to house and feed between 15-20 interns at no additional cost to the student or the university. The students spend full time at the facility, doing whatever the staff sets out for them. Since the programs vary a great deal, a brief list of the kinds of activities handled by Eastern students is given below:

. Individual counseling
. Conducting group therapy sessions
. Conducting individual and group tests
. Helping with meals, housing, etc.
. Conducting many rap sessions
. Meeting with patients family
. Building patients self-confidence
. Entertaining patients through a variety of techniques
. Attend classes conducted by psychologists and medical staff
. Involved with music therapy for patients
. Help conduct encounter groups
. Putting on Psychodramas
. Are on call 24 hours a day to help patients
. Many, many others.

Each intern is required to keep a daily log, and to write up his evaluation of the experiences. Several student evaluations have been included at the end of this formal presentation, for the committees consideration.

Periodic visits are made by the College of Education faculty, to evaluate the experiences of the interns.

Program Objectives

The objectives of Eastern's Internship program may be summarized as follows:

- To give students practical "relevant" educational experiences.
- To put theory of the classroom into practice.
- To perform a much needed service to all New Mexico state agencies.
- To allow students an experience that will allow them to make an intelligent career choice, before the granting of a degree(s).
- To increase the student's self-confidence prior to getting on the job.
- To train a greater number of students in the area of helping services so state facilities can be adequately staffed with professionals.
- To help those individuals less fortunate than themselves.
- To enrich the total college learning experience.

Personnel Involved

The personnel involved for the success of the program falls into two categories, 1) college faculty for administration and supervision of the program, and 2) the leaders and administrators of the state facilities without whose cooperation this program would not be possible.

College Faculty

Dr. Ben Luck, Chairman, Department of Psychology, College of Education, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, New Mexico.

Dr. Nedd Girard, Associate Professor of Psychology, College of Education, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, New Mexico.

Dr. William Baldwin, Professor of Psychology, College of Education, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, New Mexico.

Dr. Harold Brasell, Chairman, Department of Special Education, College of Education, Eastern New Mexico University, Portales, New Mexico.

State Agency Personnel

Since the cooperation of all state administrative personnel is involved in the success of the program, a detailed list of all facilities, and their staffs, can be supplied upon request.

Budget for the Program

The students pay their regular university fees for the semester. They are housed and fed by the facility involved. In return the students are at their disposal for the semester on a

24 hour basis.

The only expense to the College of Education is travel of the faculty member, plus additional time on the road. No faculty member receives additional funds or released time. This is a joint university-wide endeavor, and all pitch in to make the program work.

Evaluation of the Program

While the interns are at the facility, frequent periodic visits are made by the staff members to check on the progress of the program.

Each student intern keeps a daily log of his activities, in addition to writing a position paper on his or her personal experiences as to the relative merit of the program. Several of the individual papers are included in the appendix.

In addition, each facility periodically evaluates the program with the university, indicating what the students need to know, and how they could work out more effectively.

Contributions to the Improvement of Teacher Education

In this rapid world of technological change, institutions are constantly looking for ways to make their programs more meaningful to students. Involving the students in the state agency internship program is coming closer to meeting student needs for a more relevant educational program.

The textbook knowledge is actually being taken into a practical real life situation and being put to the test. Students experiment, and find out what will and will not operate in a given situation.

Education as a whole will be using more and more of the resources in its geographical area to help enhance the learning environment. Eastern New Mexico University has been attempting to do just that through its internship program. To me it is the salvation of the educational programs. It's something that has been warmly received, and the students as well as the faculty, and the citizens of the state, are enthusiastically supporting this way of learning.